THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) At airports including small airports managed by Airports Authority of India (AAI), facilities like wheel chair for physically challenged passengers and assistance for unaccompanied minors have been provided. However, there has not been any demand for setting up of 'Contact Zone' at other airports in the country including Himachal Pradesh.

Fog related problems at Delhi Airport

716. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of flights at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) at Delhi were delayed or cancelled due to fog during the last three months;

(b) if so, what are the total number of flights that were cancelled or delayed due to fog during the above period;

(c) whether it is a fact that Runway Visual Range measuring machines and lights of taxiways Z-6 and Z-7 occasionally stop working and secondary runway is not CAT-III complaint; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard and the steps being taken to improve the situation at Delhi airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Indira Gandhi International Airport Delhi has CAT-III B Instrument Landing System (ILS) on Runways 29/11 and 28/10 which enables aircraft landing and takeoff upto runway visibility of 50 mtrs. Usually there are some delays/cancellations of flights during fog due to low visibility if the airlines do not have CAT-III trained pilots and their aircraft are not equipped with the same for operating during fog periods.

(b) The total number of flights delayed/cancelled due to fog during the period were 376 and 82 respectively.

(c) and (d) Seven equipments installed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) at the three runways are CAT-III B compliant. During the fog season the RVR systems at Runway 28, Mid of 28-10, Runway 10, Runway 27 and Runway 29 worked uninterruptedly 7 x 24 hrs. The RVR systems at Runway 11 failed on one occasion and the RVR system of Mid point of Runway 29-11 failed on four occasions mainly due to failure of power supply. Installation of Uninterrupted Power Supply(UPS) at New Runway locations is being planned.

In-flight services of Air India

717. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is aware of the fact that the air passengers are unhappy because of poor inflight service and food served in Air India including the take off and landing of private Airlines are much better; and

(b) whether Government is also planning to improve the inflight service, food including comfortable flying in Air India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Civil Aviation has not received complaints about landing and take-offs of Air India Flights.

Although, on board services of the airline are at par with full service international carriers, the few complaints received are forwarded for appropriate action. The process of improvement in all areas of aircraft airworthiness, cabin service, safety drills etc. is continuous and is regulated appropriately.

Job loss in aviation sector

718. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether employees of domestic airlines in the country are facing situation of loss of their jobs;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to protect the employees of airlines including those of private airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Employees management is a human resource matter of airlines. Ministry does not regulate such matters. However, Government does not foresee any situation of major loss of jobs in airlines.

Shortage of pilots

719. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps being taken by Government to meet the acute shortage of trained pilots in the country; and

(b) whether it is a fact that due to crunch of pilots the aviation Industry will not be able to grow as per requirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) In order to have sufficient quality pilots over longer period of time, the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRIA) is being modernised through upgradation of civil and electrical infrastructure and acquisition of additional trainer aircraft. IGRUA has also entered into a management contract with M/s. CAE, a reputed international organisation in this field, to professionalise its management. The Government has also decided to set up a world-class institute at Gondia in Maharashtra as Joint Venture Enterprise under the aegis of Airports Authority of India. The other flying clubs in the country